



HUMAN SERVICES COLLABORATIVE COUNCIL

1010 N. Madison Ave. Bay City MI 48708 (989) 895-2246 Fax (989) 892-4962

Member Agencies:

Bay Area Community
Foundation

Bay Area Women's Center

Bay Area Family YMCA

Bay Arenac Behavioral Health

Bay Arenac Department of
Human Services

Bay-Arenac ISD

Bay City Public Schools

Bay County Division on Aging

Bay County Health Depart-
ment

Bay County Juvenile Home

Bay Regional Medical Center

CORY Place, Inc.

Do-All, Inc.

Good Samaritan Rescue
Mission

Lutheran Child and Family
Services

Mid Michigan Community
Action Agency

MSU Extension Bay County

Nathan Weidner Children's
Advocacy Center

Salvation Army

United Way of Bay County

The Bay City Times
Attn: Mr. John Hiner
311 5th St.
Bay City, MI 48708

Dear Mr. Hiner,

The mission of the Bay Human Services Collaborative Council is to enhance the welfare of Bay County citizens through collaboration and coordination in the understanding, planning and implementation of prevention, intervention and rehabilitation health and human services. One of the purposes of the Collaborative Council is to make existing human services more effective through interagency support and collaboration. With the recent tragic death of Mr. Marvin Schur, it is vitally important to remind our community of the many agencies that provide a safety net of services; services which could have prevented such a tragedy.

The members of this Collaborative, and the agencies they represent, extend their sympathies to any extended family of Mr. Schur. He was not known to be an individual in need. He did not seek out services and lived quietly and independently in his own home. He was probably most comfortable living on his own, with his memories of younger days and better times.

His situation is not so unique. As individuals live longer, their risk for some level of infirmity increases. According to the 2000 Census, there are 6,740 individuals over age 65 in Bay County with a disability. Research studies indicate that the possibility of dementia, a condition that affects cognitive skills and memory, increases with age. Approximately 20 % of the population over age 85 suffers from some form of dementia. According to the 2000 Census, there are 2,098 individuals age 85 or older living in Bay County.

Some have family and spouses who are actively involved in their care and needs. For some, family live far away, and there is a reluctance to seek help from outside organizations. Those who work in programs dedicated to serving the elderly are trained to be respectful of the elder's desire to live in the setting of their choice, and to respect the right of the individual to refuse services.

One of the most difficult realizations for a senior and his/her family is to recognize that it may not be safe to live at home and manage his/her affairs any longer. Our society values independence and elders are fearful that if they acknowledge frailties, the result will be removal from their home and placement in a setting where their choices and independence are limited. And who can blame them; we all want to live as independently as possible in our own homes.

There are avenues of support that can be explored to prevent future incidents. Family members can talk to their parents about bill paying. A senior can provide power of attorney to a trusted family member, if he or she is forgetting to pay bills on time. Financial institutions can provide this service, for a fee, if a senior does not want to provide power of attorney to a family member.

Anyone who is concerned about the social well-being of an elderly individual can choose from a number of community and/or faith based services that can assist them. Primarily among these is Region VII Area on Agency on Aging (800-858-1637) which provides referral services and information. The United Way of Bay County also administers a "211" information help-line that can provide information on resources to assist elderly individuals. That number is 989-893-2211. The Bay County Division on Aging (877-229-9960 or 989-895-4100) offers a number of services that can assist an elderly individual in managing or transitioning their lives to reach stability, safety and well-being. Unfortunately, there are instances when an elderly person has been subjected to physical/psychological abuse and neglect. If you suspect

that an adult has been placed in an unsafe and unstable environment, through the abuse or neglect of another person or that they may have insufficient capacity to self-manage their lives (putting themselves at risk), then please contact the Bay County Department of Human Services/Adult Protective Services unit. That number is (989) 895-2147. Due to high call volume you may experience a short wait time before speaking with an intake worker, however it is important that a referral be made with as much detail as possible. Referral sources and all information concerning the referral are strictly confidential. And, of course, should the individual be in an immediate life-threatening situation, please contact your local law enforcement authorities.

Awareness is needed at all levels, from the elderly individual, to their families, their friends, their neighbors, as well as the employees of businesses and government who provide goods or services to the individual. Everyone, at every level of our community, can renew their own efforts to prevent a tragedy like this from occurring again.

Sincerely,

Ellen M. Albrecht, MSW, LMSW
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